

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5764

As of January 12, 2022

Title: An act relating to apprenticeships and higher education.

Brief Description: Concerning apprenticeships and higher education.

Sponsors: Senators Randall, Sheldon, Conway, Das, Hasegawa, Keiser, Kuderer, Liias, Nguyen, Saldaña, Wellman, Wilson, C. and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/13/22.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Aligns the maximum Washington College Grant for full-time apprentices (WCG-A) to the maximum award for full-time students attending two-year institutions.
- Requires the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to study and report on further developing and improving opportunities for apprentices to receive credit towards degrees.
- Requires access to the financial aid offices at the community and technical colleges, or verification of access to the WCG-A by the Washington Student Achievement Council, for apprentices by the 2025-26 school year.
- Requires credit or course equivalencies to be established for registered apprenticeship programs by the 2025-26 school year.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background: Registered Apprenticeships in Washington. Apprenticeships combine classroom studies—also known as related supplemental instruction (RSI)—with paid on-the-job training supervised by a journey-level craft person or trade professional. Apprenticeships may be registered with the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council (WSATC). WSATC approves and promotes apprenticeship programs and establishes program standards for Washington State, including requirements for RSI, coordination of job experience instruction, and instructor qualifications.

Apprenticeships and Higher Education in Washington. Apprenticeships may provide their own RSI, or contract with a community and technical college (CTC) for the RSI space or instruction, or both. CTCs may charge tuition rates for ungraded courses that differ from standard rates. For apprenticeship courses, the State Board For Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has set a rate equal to one-half the standard per credit amount for tuition and services and activities fees.

Apprenticeships that do not contract with CTCs may offer RSI, but still go through CTCs for academic and course credit. Depending on the institution, apprentices may receive course credit towards a degree. One degree offered by several institutions, the Multi-Occupational Trades (MOT) associate degree, is currently available through South Seattle College, Spokane Community College, Renton Technical College, Skagit Valley College, Everett Community College, Wenatchee Valley College, and Columbia Basin College.

Washington College Grant for Apprenticeship. In 2019, the Washington College Grant (WCG) was expanded to registered apprenticeship programs. The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) has set the current maximum award for a full-time registered apprentice at \$3,000, by rule.

Summary of Bill: Washington College Grant for Apprenticeships. By the 2025-26 academic year, the SBCTC must provide eligible apprentices access to the Washington College Grant for Apprenticeships (WCG-A) through the financial aid office at the college where the apprentice receives RSI. WSAC shall verify access to the WCG-A for apprentices who receive RSI outside of the CTC system. To implement this, the SBCTC must collaborate with WSAC's Office of Financial Assistance to create a student information technology interface to simplify the application, verification of registration, eligibility, and award for students. Data-sharing agreements must be established with other state agencies to verify student data.

The maximum WCG award for students in approved registered apprenticeship programs is aligned with the maximum WCG award for students attending two-year institutions.

Developing Opportunities for Apprentices to Earn Degrees. The SBCTC is required to research, evaluate, consult with certain stakeholders, and report on further developing opportunities for registered apprentices to receive credit towards degrees.

Specifically, the SBCTC must:

- evaluate paths to credentials for apprentices with a focus on the MOT degree and an exploration of other credentials for transferability;
- examine national best practices for awarding credentials to apprentices;
- research apprentices' demand for degrees;
- assist a workgroup consisting of WSATC and a national accrediting body, to study and develop a plan for establishing credit or course equivalencies for all RSI coursework;
- review the current funding model for apprentices within the CTC system, while consulting certain stakeholders, to develop recommendations for the Legislature;
- identify and remove barriers to access the WCG-A; and
- report annually to the appropriate legislative committees, by December 1st, on its progress, findings, and recommendations.

Credit or Course Equivalencies for State Registered Apprenticeship Programs. Credit or course equivalencies for active state registered apprenticeship programs registered on or before July 1, 2022, must be established by the 2028-29 academic year.

After July 1, 2022, newly registered apprenticeship programs may only be approved if credit or course equivalencies have been established. WSATC may provide an exemption to this requirement when either all reasonable efforts to establish course or course equivalencies have been exhausted or when practical.

WSATC may consult with SBCTC faculty representatives, the Council of Presidents, and the Joint Transfer Council of Washington. Progress in ensuring course credit for apprenticeships must be included in the SBCTC's annual report.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 10, 2022.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.